

AFRICA RENEWAL

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'Blood diamonds' or assets for peace?

Bringing leaders to justice
for rights abuses

Rape in war: Congolese
women confront the pain

Panos / Toun Voeten

Also...

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Guard at an illegal diamond mine in Angola during the country's civil war.

Photo: Paul Luvu

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Big leap in China-Africa ties

Beijing offers continent more aid, trade and business

By Ernest Harsch

Like other African leaders, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi returned home from a three-day summit in Beijing with enthusiastic praise for his hosts and an armful of new economic agreements. More Ethiopian agricultural products would be allowed into China duty-free, he revealed, and China had pledged some \$500 mn for various development projects in Ethiopia. "China is an inspiration for all of us," he added. "What China shows to Africa is that it is indeed possible to turn the corner on economic development."

Fifty years after China established its first diplomatic ties with an African country, the third summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was held 3-5 November. It marked the biggest-ever gathering between Chinese and African leaders. All 48 African countries that have diplomatic relations with China took part — with most of their delegations led by presidents or prime ministers. In addition, hundreds of African businesspeople went for a two-day trade exhibit immediately following the summit, eager to explore new market outlets in the most populous country in the world, which has one of the fastest growing economies.

'New type' partnership

Building on several years of growing exchanges between China and Africa, the summit approved a three-year action plan to forge a "new type of strategic partnership." That partnership, the plan says, would be based on pragmatic cooperation, equality and mutual benefit. The plan pledges that China will:

- Double aid to Africa by 2009 (to about \$1 bn)
- Set up a \$5 bn China-Africa development fund to encourage Chinese companies to invest in Africa
- Provide \$3 bn in preferential loans and \$2 bn in preferential buyer's credits to African countries
- Cancel all debt stemming from Chinese interest-free government loans that

matured by the end of 2005, for the 31 highly indebted and least developed countries (LDCs) in Africa that have relations with China (an amount estimated at around \$1.4 bn)

- Further open China's markets to exports from African LDCs by increasing from 190 to 440 the number of products receiving zero-tariff treatment
- Train 15,000 African professionals, double the number of Chinese government scholarships given annually to Africans (to 4,000) and send 100 senior agricultural experts and 300 youth volunteers
- Build 30 hospitals, 30 malaria treatment centres and 100 rural schools.

China also vowed to support the African Union, the continent's regional organization, including by building a new convention centre at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa. It likewise reaffirmed its commitment to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the AU's development plan.

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which will hold its next

summit in Egypt in 2009, is an important vehicle for dialogue on Africa's behalf, noted UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, who represented the UN at the meeting. The forum, he said, lends a "strong voice" to the UN's work to promote African interests among developed countries, including on aid, debt relief, market access and support for Africa's anti-poverty efforts.

No strings

During visits to several African countries earlier in the year, Chinese President Hu Jintao reiterated his government's long-standing "policy of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs." On that basis, all African governments that have diplomatic ties with China were invited to the Beijing summit, no matter what their records on democracy or human rights. That stance elicited some criticism, including from human rights groups and donor agencies.

Some African commentators have pointed to shortcomings in China's eco-

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Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo with Chinese President Hu Jintao at the opening of the China-Africa summit in Beijing.

Congolese women confront legacy of rape

War and sexual violence leave survivors in desperate need

By **Mary Kimani**

“If there had been peace, this would not have happened to us,” says Kasoke Kabunga. Like thousands of other women, Kasoke and her daughter were raped by armed militiamen in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Her daughter died. Kasoke survived, but contracted HIV/AIDS.

Their tragedy is the female face of 10 years of war in the DRC, which has claimed more than 3 million lives and displaced another 3.5 million people. Today, a handful of courageous Congolese women are seeking to help Kasoke and other rape survivors find solutions to the many problems facing them.

Rachel Kembe, a medical doctor, is one of those providing help. In 1997, when hundreds of women from the Masisi and Ruchuru areas were arriving in the town of Goma with serious injuries, she and five other professional women came together to assist them through the Association nationale des mamans pour l'aide aux déshérités (ANAMAD, National Mothers' Association to Aid the Dispossessed).

“We contributed US\$20–50 every month,” Ms. Kembe explains. “That is how we initially began our work. Today we have 2,500 rape survivors from Goma and the surrounding villages that we have assisted in one way or another.” But the number keeps growing.

Rape, she adds, “is like a weapon in this war.” UN estimates confirm the extent of the practice. In October 2006, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno reported that 12,000 women and girls had been raped in the previous six months alone.

Congo's war began when militia and armed forces presiding over the 1994 genocide in neighbouring Rwanda were overthrown and fled into civilian refugee camps in the eastern provinces of the DRC. From those camps, they repeatedly attacked the new government in Rwanda, prompting the Rwandans to strike back in 1996, setting off a regional war. That war,



A rape victim recovering in a hospital in Goma, in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo: Rape has often been used as a weapon of war in the region.

in turn, spawned new armed militias. The victims were mostly civilians, and fighters routinely raped and tortured women.

In 2004–05, the UN and non-governmental organizations estimated that as many as 100,000 women had been raped in the entire eastern DRC.

‘Our resources are not adequate’

The survivors struggle with many different legal, medical and livelihood problems. Twenty-seven-year-old Nyota Mbulu was gang-raped by four militiamen in Uvira. Her parents and husband were killed. She fled to Goma, losing everything. Nyota also contracted HIV/AIDS and is in the terminal stages of the illness, too weak to work for a living. She is constantly being evicted for rent arrears on the small room ANAMAD found for her in Goma.

Most times, Ms. Kembe is able to raise enough money to get Nyota settled back in. But within Goma alone, ANAMAD is working with about 500 rape survivors facing similar problems. ANAMAD has built makeshift housing for 38 displaced women and their children, but Ms. Kembe wishes she could do much more. “Our

resources are not nearly adequate for this task,” she told *Africa Renewal*.

ANAMAD calculates that with as little as \$200,000 it could provide basic shelter for the neediest women, improve the makeshift school the group is running for the women's children and pay teachers' salaries for three years. “We already have the land,” explains Ms. Kembe. “We managed to get the regional officials to allocate us what we needed. The only problem now is money to do it.”

Mutual support

Some women, among them Marie Donatien, have tried to ease their problems by living together. Ms. Donatien is originally from Bukavu, on the shores of Lake Kivu, a beautiful area that was terrorized during the war by three armed groups that attacked villages, looted houses, destroyed property and raped women.

She was raped in her husband's presence — a tactic common in Congo's war and during the Rwanda genocide. The goal of that practice, experts state, is to maximize the humiliation of the women and their communities and to “end resistance”

by instilling fear. Such women are often subsequently rejected or abandoned by their communities. Ms. Donatien's own husband left her when she became pregnant, although they have since reconciled.

The experience gave Ms. Donatien, who now lives in Goma, the inspiration to set up an organization, Mamans organisées pour le développement et la paix (MOADE, Mothers for Development and Peace), through which women like her can find mutual support. What they lack in resources, they make up for in solidarity.

MOADE members in Goma pool their resources to rent 15 rooms, each housing 12-16 people. Sharing space provides more stability than each would have alone. But the rooms are often crowded and the women are frequently sick and unable to work. Sometimes, despite their combined efforts, they too face eviction.

Ms. Rayika Omar, the director of African Rights, an organization helping rape survivors in Rwanda, recently noted that in Central Africa such "women's associations are, at present, the main source of assistance for rape victims and women living with HIV/AIDS." Unfortunately, she added, the groups have received only "intermittent, partial or temporary assistance in the face of persistent, all-embracing and terminal problems."

Ms. Jeanne Ward, a researcher with an ad hoc consortium of UN and non-governmental agencies working on sexual

violence, agrees. She noted in an interview with IRIN, a UN humanitarian news service, that the world's response to growing evidence of massive rape in conflict has largely been helpless shock and horror. "It's as if it's something new. [People ask] 'How can this atrocity be happening?' Well, it can because of impunity, because of a lack of programming, a lack of standards for intervention and so on."

Ms. Ward challenged those with resources to stop asking how such things can happen and start asking how to deal with them.

Medical assistance

Rape survivors often suffer serious internal injuries requiring extensive surgical intervention. But getting such help is difficult. Even before the war, the DRC's health care system was run-down and underfunded because of corruption and mismanagement. Many hospitals had no water or electricity. Some lacked roofs and windows. Doctors and nurses often were not paid or supported by the government.

The war worsened the situation. Militias looted beds, medicines and equipment, especially in rural areas, where 70 per cent of the population lives. Today, outside the towns of Goma and Bukavu, few rural health centres can deal with rape injuries. Personnel often lack the training to handle major internal tearing, let alone HIV testing and management.

Transport also collapsed during the war. Most people can travel only on foot. Mia Nyisa, from Siraro, walked six days after being raped before she reached help in Goma. "They operated on me at DOCs [Doctors on Call] centre," she told local non-governmental organization (NGO) personnel. "They had to remove my uterus."

Groups like Doctors on Call provide free emergency support for those who can get to the towns. But their budgets are too small to provide free treatment for long-term problems or other ailments. Mia got free treatment the first time, but follow-ups required minimal fees that she could not afford. "I still suffer a lot of pain. They help with what they can, but it is difficult."

With the end of large-scale hostilities in 2000, NGOs have brought some assistance to local health centres. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) provides training in rape support to medical staff in rural health centres. However, trainees may end up with the knowledge, "but no resources, medicines and equipment to actually do the work," Ms. Kembe points out.

UN agencies and NGOs active in the DRC have presented to donors a joint initiative to help prevent sexual violence against women and children, as well as to aid victims. In 2004 they estimated that \$30 mn would be needed for the work, which would include medicine for those with HIV/AIDS. Donors and the government are still considering how to implement the initiative.

Anti-retroviral drugs

There is a huge gap between the HIV medications needed and what is available. If rape victims can take certain drugs within 72 hours of an assault, that can offer some protection against infection. Such drugs are available in a few NGO-supported hospitals in the towns, but not in rural areas.

Rape survivors with HIV/AIDS must also struggle to obtain anti-retroviral medicines or antibiotics to deal with opportunistic infections. Nyota is one of the few HIV-positive rape survivors in Goma on anti-retro-

A psychologist (left) counsels a Congolese rape survivor. More services are needed to help such women with their physical and mental traumas.



AP/Bryan Meister

viral medication, which is provided by the NGO Médecin du monde.

Out of the 260 HIV-positive women supported by ANAMAD, only six are currently on anti-retrovirals, notes Ms. Kembe. "The resources to do the same for the others are simply not available."

A survey in 2004 by Amnesty

resistance and the same drugs cannot help any more."

Honorine Nyolo works for Action Aid International in the DRC. Her organization is trying to improve the income-generating abilities of rape survivors, so that they can meet their nutritional needs.

"We took 100 women from MCADE

least twice that," says Ms. Kembe. Action Aid International notes that there are no clinicians in Goma, Edward Kakande, the group's country director, told *Africa Renewal*. "At present, those helping the women are counsellors, usually with only a few weeks of on-the-job training."

Impunity and injustice

The trauma is often made worse by the fact that few rapists are ever punished. Most militia forces in the DRC do not have official uniforms; they typically wear T-shirts and camouflage trousers. So it is hard to tell members of one group from another, let alone identify an individual attacker, making it difficult to prosecute.

Impunity is not unique to the DRC. In neighbouring Rwanda, more than 100,000 women are believed to have been raped during the genocide. "It is not easy to take the matter to court on your own," says Mariana Mukakarisa, a rape survivor. "People in the community might not know you were raped. The idea of standing in public and talking about it is hard. . . . There is the shame and stigma. It's hard."

Gaudelive Mukasavasi, who works for the NGO Réseau des femmes helping Rwandan rape victims, says that trauma has made the women bitter and withdrawn. "We have tried to encourage the women to testify in the local courts, but many are reluctant," she told *Africa Renewal*.

Documenting rape has met with some success and encouraged some Rwandan rape survivors to testify at the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, based in Tanzania. Their testimony helped convict two former government officials who had orchestrated rapes during the 1994 genocide.

In the DRC, prosecuting rapists has also been challenging. "There is a lot of impunity in the Congo," Ms. Kembe notes. "We have lodged many complaints. We have even identified the perpetrators of the crimes. We report to the police and then a few days later you see them free. This is especially the case if they are military or former combatants."

A woman in eastern Congo who was gang-raped by militia fighters in 2002. As a result, she has contracted HIV.



Reuters / Euan Denholm

International found only one experimental anti-retroviral programme in Bukavu, run by Médecins sans frontières and designed to help some 150 women. The human rights group noted that the medication, costing \$29 per month, was simply too expensive for the NGOs to provide more or for people in the area to buy on their own. Amnesty International argued that either cheaper drugs should be made available or donors should make a greater financial commitment.

Livelihood problems

Even with cheaper drugs, however, poverty presents other hurdles. For anti-retroviral drugs to be effective, those taking them need to be on an especially healthy diet, since the medicines can be physically overwhelming for someone who is not eating well. And women like Nyota can barely afford food.

"Taking these drugs on an empty stomach is not good," says Ms. Kembe. "The women end up feeling weak and very ill and stop taking the dosage, which makes things worse because the virus develops

and 100 women from ANAMAD," Ms. Nyolo told *Africa Renewal*. "We gave cooperative loans so that they can engage in commerce.... They say this has helped them. But it was a very small project, about \$20,000 to each group. And now the project is over."

Ms. Kembe argues that the women need a programme that lasts longer than six months. "We noticed that nearly 70 per cent of them had problems returning this money because urgent needs crop up: rent, school fees and medical fees. They need something longer-term if they are to sustain themselves."

Psychological trauma

In the midst of the daily challenges of finding food, clothing, shelter and medication, the psychological trauma the women have suffered is often overlooked. And it is not only the women who need psychological help, explains Ms. Donatien. "Our men and children saw us raped. They too suffer from great trauma and need assistance."

ANAMAD has 12 non-professional counsellors in Goma, "but we need at

Africa ending impunity for rights abuses

Former presidents of Liberia and Chad face trial

By Michael Flesherman

The world took a giant step towards eliminating impunity for human rights abuses on 9 November when the International Criminal Court (ICC) opened its first official hearing, in a case against a Congolese militia leader. Unlike temporary and specially created tribunals like the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the ICC is the world's first permanent international criminal court, with the authority to try and convict individuals for serious human rights violations wherever they occur. Africa is expected to feature prominently on the new court's docket, with investigations also under way into alleged abuses by members of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda and combatants in the Darfur region of western Sudan.

Africa's own efforts to hold senior government officials and rebel leaders accountable for torture, murder, rape and other serious crimes against humanity also marked new milestones in 2006. In March, Nigerian authorities arrested former Liberian President Charles Taylor and transferred him to the authority of a special court in Sierra Leone. He faces charges stemming from war crimes committed there by rebels said to have been equipped, supported and controlled by him during that country's civil war. The charges range from terrorism, rape and murder to mutilation and the use of child soldiers. It was the first time a former African head of state had been arrested and charged with human rights abuses committed while in office.

Four months later, Senegal announced plans to try former Chadian President Hissène Habré for the torture and murder of suspected political opponents during his eight years in power. Mr. Habré was overthrown in 1990 and fled into exile in Senegal, where until now he has successfully evaded prosecution. In November Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade announced the formation of a commission to prepare for the trial, which will require changes in some domestic laws, as well as international technical assistance and financing.

'A powerful message'

These moves have been hailed as the beginning of a new era of accountability for abusive political leaders in Africa and an important blow against impunity for official misconduct around the world. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan declared that "the capture and trial of Mr. Taylor will send a powerful message to the region and beyond that impunity will not be allowed to stand and that the rule of law must prevail." Mr. Reed Brody of the non-governmental group Human Rights Watch, who is also an attorney for some of Mr. Habré's alleged victims, welcomed the Senegalese announcement as "an important step in the right direction."

But political and legal obstacles to the prosecution of government leaders for serious human rights violations remain formidable. Governments are often loath to take up cases outside their borders, particularly when the accused are heads of state who traditionally enjoy immunity from prosecution for acts committed in office. In some instances, guarantees of immunity are demanded by combatants in exchange for laying down their arms. In others, differences between national and international legal systems and the absence of competent institutions can pose vexing questions of jurisdiction and procedure.

In Mr. Habré's case, the long effort to bring him to trial began within months of his overthrow and flight to Senegal in 1990, with the creation of the Association des victimes des crimes et de la répression politiques au Tchad (AVCRP), a group of

Capture of former Liberian President Charles Taylor reported by newspapers in Sierra Leone, where he faces war crimes charges.



nearly 800 victims of human rights abuses. In 1992 a Chadian government commission of inquiry found that Mr. Habré was responsible for the deaths of 40,000 or more people and for the widespread use of torture. Although the commission recommended that Mr. Habré be charged and tried in a Chadian court, the government declined to take up the case amid fears of violence from Mr. Habré's supporters and concerns about meeting international standards for a fair trial.

In 2000 the AVCRP went to court in Senegal, accusing the former president of responsibility for crimes against humanity. Although the judge ruled in AVCRP's favour, the indictment was later dismissed by Senegal's highest appeals court. It ruled that Mr. Habré could not be charged in Senegal for crimes said to have been committed in another country. Three of Mr. Habré's alleged victims then went to court

AU: Try African leaders in African courts

In January 2006 the African Union (AU) established a committee of seven eminent African jurists to review the case of former Chadian President Hissène Habré. In its report, the panel declared that "there is urgency in sending strong signals throughout Africa that impunity is no longer an option." It found that:

- Political office offers no immunity from prosecution for human rights abuses.
- Trials must proceed in accord with international fair trial standards.
- African leaders should be tried in African courts whenever possible, or on African territory by ad-hoc tribunals, including those convened by the AU Assembly.
- All African signatories to the UN Convention Against Torture have jurisdiction in cases of serious human rights abuses. Countries that have not adopted the convention must do so.
- The AU judicial organ, the African Court, should be granted jurisdiction to hear criminal cases and provided a "rapid response mechanism" for timely action against impunity.

in Belgium, where it was possible to try him under legislation permitting Belgian courts to try individuals for heinous human rights offences wherever they are committed. It was not until September 2005, however, that Belgium issued an international arrest warrant for Mr. Habré and requested his extradition from Senegal.

'On behalf of Africa'

Again the Senegalese courts demurred, with the country's appeals court ruling that it lacked the authority to carry out the Belgian request. Amid indications that Belgium would take Senegal to the International Court of Justice for failing to meet its obligations under the UN Convention Against Torture, President Abdoulaye Wade referred the matter to the African Union (AU) at the end of 2005.

Following the recommendations of a special judicial review committee (see box above), the AU mandated Senegal on 2 July 2006 to "prosecute and ensure that Hissène Habré is tried, on behalf of Africa, by a competent Senegalese court with guarantees for a fair trial." The pan-African body also pledged to assist Senegalese authorities and urged African countries and the international community to support the effort.

After years of delays, however, the issue for Mr. Habré's alleged victims is less about where and by whom he will be tried, and more about if and when. "We as the victims don't think that it is the AU or Senegal with their limited resources who can try Habré," said AVCRP founder and

vice-president Suleymane Guengueng. "What means do they have?" The AVCRP is not insisting that Senegal try Mr. Habré, he continued, "but for them not to deny us his trial" in another venue.

"The best solution," Mr. Guengueng told *Africa Renewal*, "is to extradite him to Belgium. If the AU is firm in its decision to fight impunity, that is laudable." Yet five months after the AU decision, he noted, "nothing has been done up to today.... It doesn't give one confidence that this action will take Africa in the direction of no impunity. I don't think their decision will materialize.... We victims

Widows and mothers of political victims demonstrating in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad, to demand that former President Hissène Habré be tried for his abuses.

feel it is their intention to keep us waiting so long that we die without seeing justice. It is very sad."

Persuading Senegal that it has the legal obligation and moral responsibility to try Mr. Habré was difficult, acknowledged Mr. Richard Dicker, director of the international justice programme for Human Rights Watch. But the problem is not limited to Africa. "National courts around the world are reluctant to try former heads of state for crimes not committed on their territory," he told *Africa Renewal*. With the Senegalese announcement, however, "we finally have the prospect for an African domestic court to put on trial a former head of state accused of the most serious crimes that can be committed under international law. If that happens, it will be a significant breakthrough. The implications are very exciting."

No sanctuary

Mr. Taylor's day in court appears to be more certain. But his case too has been marked by difficult political choices be-



tween justice and stability, national sovereignty and international jurisdiction, and even potential venues for the trial itself.

Mr. Taylor was elected Liberia's president in 1997 after a bloody civil conflict. Fighting resumed in 1999. In August 2003, with rebels closing in on the Liberian capital, Monrovia, Mr. Taylor accepted an offer of safe haven from Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo as part of a peace agreement. The arrangement allowed Mr. Taylor to evade prosecution for alleged complicity in atrocities committed in neighbouring Sierra Leone by a rebel force known as the Revolutionary United Front. An international tribunal established by the UN and the Sierra Leonean government, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, had issued a warrant for his arrest earlier that year. Nigeria's offer of sanctuary was particularly strongly criticized in the North, where many governments and human rights organizations demanded that the former Liberian president face justice.

Mr. Taylor was finally detained by the Nigerian police and turned over to Liberian authorities in March 2006 at the request of Liberia's newly elected President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Mr. Taylor was transferred to Sierra Leone, and then on to the Hague, in the Netherlands, where he awaits trial on 11 war crimes charges by the Special Court, a unique "hybrid" tribunal composed of Sierra Leonean and international judges and staff.

But initially there was little enthusiasm in West Africa for bringing Mr. Taylor to trial — in part because of fears that his supporters, some of whom were then still armed and disaffected, could destabilize fragile peace and reconstruction efforts in the war-ravaged region. There were also concerns that his handover could prolong other conflicts by persuading combatants they could not rely on promises of amnesty or asylum. Despite the Sierra Leone warrant, Ghanaian authorities had declined to arrest Mr. Taylor in Accra in 2003, since he was there to attend crucial peace talks.

In the face of heavy political pressure from Washington — the US Congress once offered a \$2 mn reward for Mr. Taylor's arrest — Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo defended the sanc-

tuary offer as a diplomatic necessity and refused to expel him in the absence of a formal request from a democratically elected Liberian government.

Liberian authorities, however, were notably reluctant to have Mr. Taylor back on Liberian soil. Indeed, Mr. Taylor does not currently face charges there. Speaking at her first press conference as president in January 2006, Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf said that she did not want Mr. Taylor's fate "to be the issue that constrains us or the issue that causes us not to be able to do what we have to do here for the Liberian people." Mr. Taylor's prosecution, she noted pointedly, was therefore of secondary importance to Liberia "even though it may be of utmost concern to the international community."

Even his transfer to Freetown into the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone proved only a temporary leg of Mr. Taylor's winding journey towards justice. Within days of his arrival, the Special Court requested that the trial be moved to ICC facilities in the Hague to allay security concerns among the region's governments. Although Mr. Taylor will still be judged by the Special Court, it took three months to work through the diplomatic and legal details of the transfer, including a Security Council resolution authorizing the shift and an agreement by the UK to imprison Mr. Taylor if he is convicted.

Human Rights Watch's Mr. Dicker acknowledged that there can sometimes be a tension, "but not an opposition," between the need for criminal accountability and the political imperatives of peacemaking. "But it's a serious misstep to trade away justice in the hope of reaching a peace settlement. For peace to be durable, there must be justice for the most serious offences."

Justice for all?

Part of the challenge of bringing presidents to trial, he noted, lies in the gaps between sovereign national courts, which remain the cornerstone of the world's justice system, and a body of international jurisprudence and institutions still very much in its infancy. Ideally, he said, "national courts would try individuals for egregious human rights crimes, even those not occurring on their territory or involving their citizens," using doctrines such as universal jurisdiction. International courts like the ICC and the Rwanda and former Yugoslavia tribunals, he noted, "are courts of last resort, becoming involved only when national courts are unable or unwilling to assume jurisdiction."

It was also important for justice to be seen to be done. Part of the challenge for the future, he asserted, is to ensure that the evolving system of international justice

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Multiple jurisdictions

A mix of national and international tribunals has emerged to overcome the political and jurisdictional obstacles hampering prosecution of human rights violators. They include:

National courts — Mandated under national law to try domestic and international human rights abusers in accordance with international treaty obligations and evolving legal doctrines of "universal jurisdiction."

Hybrid courts — Created by agreement between the UN and a host country. These are composed of both national and international judges, attorneys and staff and permit national justice systems, with assistance from the international community, to try cases of serious abuses occurring within their borders. The Special Court for Sierra Leone is the first hybrid.

Ad-hoc international tribunals — Temporary courts established by the Security Council. Staffed by international jurists and other personnel, these are empanelled when national courts are unable or unwilling to try suspects charged with war crimes and other serious offences committed during specific conflicts. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda is one.

International Criminal Court — Established by treaty, the ICC is the world's first permanent tribunal mandated to try individuals charged with gross human rights violations in countries recognizing ICC jurisdiction or caused by citizens of those states. Cases may be referred to the court by participating states, the Security Council or the ICC prosecutor. As of 1 November 2006, 103 countries were party to the ICC statute, including 28 in Africa.

Millions of activists for a day

Stand Up campaign seeks to garner public support to fight poverty

By **Gumisal Mutume**

In October, more than 23 million people — some 3.6 million of them in Africa — set a world record by literally standing up to bring attention to persistent global poverty and to prompt world leaders to act on their promises to eradicate the scourge. The message of the Stand Up Against Poverty campaign, coordinated by the New York-based UN Millennium Campaign, reached people at more than 11,000 events in over 80 countries — cricket fans in Jaipur, India, music lovers at a concert in Harare, Zimbabwe, children in school in Lebanon and soccer supporters in Mexico. Organizers timed the global campaign to coincide with other events marking the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

"Together, we sent a clear message to our political leaders that we are going to keep pushing them to deliver on aid, on debt cancellation, on trade justice and to provide good and accountable governments," said Mr. Kumi Naidoo of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP). An alliance of community organizations, faith-based groups, trade unions and campaigners in over 100 countries, GCAP was one of the organizations supporting the Stand Up campaign.

Stand Up served as a reminder to the 189 world leaders who gathered for the 2000 Millennium Summit at the UN in New York that they are nearing the halfway mark to 2015 — the date by which they pledged to attain a number of targets in the fight against poverty. Known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the targets include a reduction in child mortality, primary education for all children and progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Stand Up also demanded debt cancellation for poor countries, more and better aid, government accountability in both North and South and "fair" trade rules to allow developing countries to take better advantage of world trade.

"It does not require heroism to help save the lives of people dying in poor

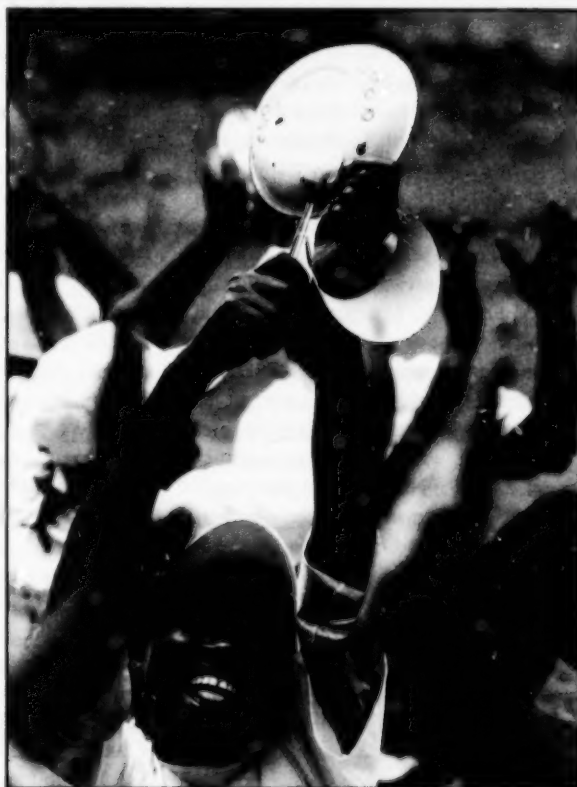
countries due to poverty and help to promote economic development," says UN Special Advisor on the MDGs and head of the UN Millennium Campaign Jeffrey Sachs. "It would just take having our eyes opened. It would take some attention. It would take a breakthrough in our country [the US] from doing nothing to doing something, because we really are, essentially, doing nothing right now."

The campaign therefore asked ordinary people to do the least they could — stand up and read a statement asking leaders in industrial and developing nations to keep their promises. But a number of participants interviewed by *Africa Renewal* at an event in New York said they did not understand how their efforts would translate into poverty reduction in poor countries. "How does my standing up put food in the mouth of a starving child in Africa?" asked a UN staff member who requested anonymity.

Broader campaign

By asking individuals to take simple actions, Stand Up gave ordinary citizens the chance to become campaigners, explains Ms. Sylvia Michuli, communication coordinator in the Africa office of the UN Millennium Campaign in Nairobi, Kenya. The idea, she says, was to use Stand Up as a symbolic gesture to draw global attention to poverty and the MDGs.

More than five years after the Millennium Summit, its goals and issues are not only far from the electoral agenda



Kenyans bang spoons against plates during an October 2006 "Stand Up" anti-poverty rally in Nairobi.

in many countries, but most people have not even heard about them. A 2005 EuroBarometre survey, conducted by the European Commission, found that only 12 per cent of citizens in that region have heard about the MDGs and that "real" awareness of the issues may even be lower. Another study in Canada reports that 62 per cent of those who had heard about the MDGs could not say what they were about.

Stand Up was a useful tool to educate citizens because "it was very easy for ordinary people to get involved," Ms. Michuli told *Africa Renewal*. "We managed to get more than 3.6 million people in Africa involved, the first time we have been able to do this." In addition, she says, it was not an isolated event, but part of a broader

effort by a coalition of anti-poverty groups "to put sustained pressure on governments to deliver on their promises."

'An invitation to citizens'

In 2005, GCAP held a series of events similar to Stand Up. It asked ordinary citizens around the world to wear white wristbands and demand that their governments act against poverty, explains Mr. Henry Malumo, coordinator of the GCAP coalition in Zambia. "It was an invitation to citizens to take their rightful place and demand good governance," he told *Africa Renewal*. He says that for too long Africans have been passive recipients of flawed policies designed by their governments and international partners.

The first of the GCAP-led events, the Make Poverty History (MPH) campaign, was held before the July 2005 summit of the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialized nations in Gleneagles, Scotland. Two others were staged later that year, before the World Summit at the UN and the World Trade Organization's ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December.

Whether such campaigns achieve the desired results is the subject of an ongoing study, the Public Perceptions of Poverty survey, funded by the UK government's Department for International Development. The study finds that in general the proportion of the public in the UK saying they were "very concerned" about poverty in poor countries rose sharply in July 2005 following the MPH activities. However, it declined in the second half of the year, returning to pre-2005 levels. This may mean that such campaigns need to be sustained in order to maintain public interest on these matters, the survey notes.

Similarly, a majority of those interviewed in the Public Perception of Poverty survey reported awareness of the G-8 immediately after the MPH campaign, compared to a small minority previously. Without knowledge of the G-8, the study says, it would have been difficult to pursue political dialogue on the international causes of underdevelopment or highlight the role of the donor community in the fight against poverty.

At the Gleneagles summit, the UK,

Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US agreed to write off the debts of the world's poorest countries and double aid flows by 2010. While the MPH cannot be directly credited for this, it did play a role in mobilizing pressure on the G-8, the study says.

Complex issues

Such campaigns, however, only go so far in educating people on the complex issues of debt, trade, aid and development. Even after the MPH, people's understanding of poverty and development issues remains shallow, the study notes. For example, many people believe that development assistance is an expression of sympathy and solidarity with victims of humanitarian crises, rather than part of a long-term commitment to fighting global poverty. Because people see development assistance as mere charity, aid budgets are often the first to be cut in times of economic difficulty.

If political leaders from rich donor nations are genuinely committed to pov-

erty reduction and long-term development, they need to "shift from dependency on passive, uninformed public support for aid to a more critically aware constituency at home," says the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a group of 30 rich countries, in its own assessment of public views on poverty. Currently, public discussion of and education about development are not a top priority in OECD countries, and this must change, notes the report, *MDGs, Taxpayers and Aid Effectiveness*. OECD countries now spend about 0.26 per cent of their aid budgets on educating the public about aid and development issues, well below the 3 per cent they have agreed is necessary for this purpose.

The authors of the OECD study, Ms. Ida McDonnell and Mr. Henri-Bernard Solignac Lecomte, recommend "the building of a constituency in Northern countries by engaging people in a deeper debate about development that could be sustained even after the 'debt-relief bubble' is gone." ■

Ending impunity

from page 9

is not seen as an instrument of Northern power — with only the leaders of poor, weak countries held to account in the courts of the mighty.

While much of the focus of the campaign against official impunity is currently on Africa, it is not limited to the continent. In Europe, an international tribunal is continuing to hear charges against leaders of the former Yugoslavia for abuses committed during that country's civil conflict. Before former Chilean President Augusto Pinochet died in December, victims and investigators pressed to bring him to trial for torture and executions committed in the wake of his 1973 coup.

Nor may officials of the most powerful countries necessarily remain exempt. In mid-November, a group of international human rights organizations headed by the New York-based Centre for Constitutional Rights filed charges in a German court alleging that some senior US government officials are responsible for torture and other crimes related to the "war on terror"

and the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

"Over time," Mr. Dicker predicts, "international justice will become a more level playing field."

National courts, international justice

The primacy of national courts in protecting human rights makes strengthening legal systems in post-conflict and developing countries an urgent priority, Mr. Dicker says. "In many places the courts simply lack the expertise, resources and infrastructure to meet international trial standards and give real meaning to the idea of the rule of law." Until local courts can successfully prosecute such cases, the world will need a mix of national and international institutions tailored to specific circumstances and supported by the UN and its member states.

"Let's keep in mind how new all of this is," he says. "It has really only been in the last 15 years that these various courts have emerged. One size doesn't fit all, and for that reason we need a number of different approaches. We have a long way to go, but it's still a dramatic departure from business as usual in the 20th century." ■

Food keeps African children in school

NEPAD supports school feeding programmes

By Itai Madamombe

A year ago, Fatouma would watch other children run to school while she stayed behind to care for her younger brothers and sisters. But a mere \$34 per year helped the shy eight-year-old Senegalese girl take her place among students in the Tambacounda region in the eastern part of the country. Poor children are enrolling and staying in school, enticed by the daily meals they receive.

"When I wake up in the morning, I get ready to go to school very quickly because I know that good food is waiting for me," says Fatouma. "I'm happy that I can spend the whole day at school learning and I don't have to walk the long way home hungry. I like eating rice every day. In my family, we eat rice only two or three times a year."

Jean-Noel Gentile, the deputy Senegal country director of

ary education and improve the relevance of school curricula to Africa's development.

'They become better students'

"Children like Fatouma are the future scientists and economists who will usher Africa to prosperity," Mr. Gentile recently told *Africa Renewal*. "But on empty stomachs, they become easily distracted and have problems concentrating on their schoolwork. They become better students when their bodies are well nourished and healthy. The incentive of getting a meal also reduces absenteeism. Most significantly, performance improves and drop-out rates decrease."

Without enough nutritious food, explains Ms. Gaby Duffy, the head of the WFP feeding programme in Senegal, Fatouma did not grow to be as healthy as other children her age. She

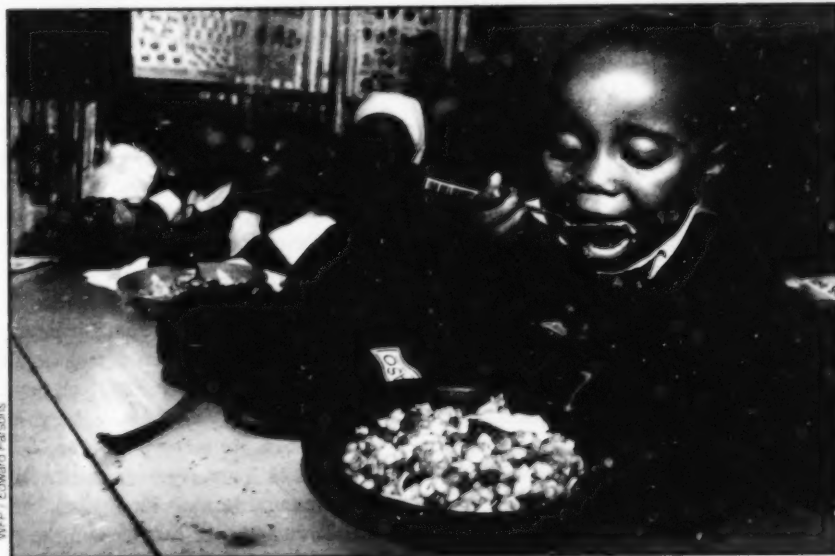
looks five, instead of her eight years. When Fatouma started attending school, she was so weak from hunger that by the time she walked the 6 kilometres to school, she was too tired to learn.

Poor nutrition is a big problem in central and southeastern Senegal, where the WFP has the bulk of its school feeding programmes. The economy declined in the 1990s, leaving many with little to eat. Farming was weakened further by the arid conditions there. Most of the people there

are subsistence farmers — struggling to grow enough corn, groundnuts, millet and beans to feed their families.

Encouraging farmers

NEPAD, with the WFP and other partners, is linking school feeding directly with agricultural development. The scheme, officially known as the Home-Grown School Feeding programme, insists on buying from local farmers the rice, beans, wheat, dairy and other ingredients used to prepare the food children are given in schools. It therefore reduces malnutrition while providing local farmers with the opportunity to sell their produce to participating schools.



School feeding programmes help keep children in school and create markets for poor food farmers.

the UN's World Food Programme (WFP), says the daily meals given at the school motivate parents to enroll their children and encourage the students to remain there. The WFP funds most of the programmes, but parents pay CFA 300 francs, about US\$0.60, per month for condiments and fish. Those who cannot afford to pay help to prepare the food or provide wood for cooking.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a vision and strategic framework adopted by African leaders in 2001, refers to education as an important step in reviving prosperity on the continent. NEPAD officials are working with partners such as the WFP to get every child into primary school by 2015. Together, they also hope to expand access to second-

see page 16

Woman storekeeper boosts Malawi farming

NEPAD seeks to bring fertilizer nearer to villagers

By Itai Madamombe

On a small farming plot not far from her grocery store, Dinnah Kapiza points at the different types of fertilizers, explaining how each should be used. Local farmers gather around her, asking questions about the pros and cons of each brand she sells at Tisaiwale Variety Shop in Mponela, 60 kilometres from the Malawian capital, Lilongwe.

The 58-year-old businesswoman is one of a new breed of "agro-dealers," who not only sell products, but are certified to advise customers on how to best use them.

"We don't want them to just buy," Ms. Kapiza told *Africa Renewal*. "We want them to know the best fertilizer to use for their needs and how to use it. You can't just use chemicals any way you want. Most are fatal. As trained agro-dealers, we have demonstration plots. When people ask about a specific product, I can say: 'Please come and see; it's right here and this is what you do'."

She adds: "Because I help them with farming tips, they return to buy my supplies. So it is advertising, as well as helping people. We are improving farming methods, therefore food security and economic welfare. Everybody benefits in the end."

Struggling for food

Small-scale farmers in Africa are struggling to meet food needs. Poor soil, notes Maria Wanzala, an expert with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), is one of the major reasons they cannot produce enough food to supply the more than 204 million people on the continent who suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

"Africa loses the equivalent of over \$4 bn worth of soil nutrients per year," Ms. Wanzala, the NEPAD's fertilizer adviser, points out. "Yet small-scale African farmers use little or no fertilizer to nourish the impoverished soil. They use only about 8 kilogrammes per hectare, versus a world average of 100 kilos per hectare."

Reducing hunger on the continent, stresses Ms. Wanzala,

must begin with addressing its severely depleted soils. Improving agriculture is a priority under NEPAD, Africa's development framework. In June, NEPAD promoters held a Fertilizer Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, that brought together

Fertilizer and seed distribution in Malawi: Shopkeepers can help supply farmers not only with inputs, but also agricultural advice.



African images: Steve Morgan

heads of state and diverse stakeholders. Subsequently, they adopted 12 action points that included taking concrete steps, by 2007, to improve farmers' access to fertilizers by developing agro-dealer networks in rural areas.

Helping farmers

Aaron Kamwaza is one of the farmers who has benefited from improved agro-dealer networks. He grows maize, groundnuts and vegetables near Ms. Kapiza's store. Easier access to fertilizer, says the farmer, has boosted his yields.

"The soil here is very, very poor. Without feeding it fertilizers, you get little out of it," Mr. Kamwaza said. "This is why I'm happy the store sells everything we need right here in our village. It saves us extra money and time. We don't have to go to the city."

If farmers do not have supplies, they cannot do anything with their knowledge, says Richard Chapweteka, the country director of the Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs (CNFA). The organization seeks innovative ways to boost rural incomes by empowering farmers and entrepreneurs.

With funding from the Rockefeller Foundation in the US, CNFA started a guarantee fund to help grocery store owners,

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Combating Zambia's 'hidden hunger'

NEPAD and partners fortify food with vitamins and minerals

By **Itai Madamombe**

The majority of children in Zambia eat a meal at least once or twice daily. But despite a full stomach, many lack nutrients essential for their physical and mental development. The Zambian government is fighting this "hidden hunger" by fortifying maize meal, the staple food, with life-saving vitamins and minerals.

"A child can eat three meals per day, but still have prob-

"We became concerned when the latest government research revealed that 66 per cent of all Zambian children under five years of age suffer from vitamin A deficiency and 63 per cent lack enough iron," Mr. Siamusantu told *Africa Renewal*.

Maize fortification

In response, the government launched a programme in 2006 to fortify all commercially milled maize with iron, vitamin A, folic acid and zinc. Legislation, Mr. Siamusantu says, is also expected by February 2007 to mandate that all maize meal sold in stores contain these essential vitamins and nutrients.

By controlling deficiencies in children, says Amanda Marlin, the communication manager for the foundation Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), African nations can jump-start development in a short period. Set up to foster efforts to fill the micronutrients gap, GAIN is helping fund the project in Zambia.

"Anytime you talk about development, you are talking years of work. But with food fortification, you see results in a short period," Ms. Marlin

says. "NEPAD leaders are supportive of these efforts, because they've seen it work in Europe and America and they said, 'Let's make this happen in Africa'."

Several countries in Africa, she says, already have fortification programmes, but GAIN, NEPAD and other partners aim to expand them to 47 countries over three years. It makes sense to tackle the problem on a regional scale, Ms. Marlin continues. Because food is traded between countries, it is important to ensure that food from across the border is all fortified.

"The beauty of this project is that we don't ask people to change their habits," she says. "People resist big diet changes. We enhance whatever is already an important part of their diet."

This was a lesson Zambia had to learn, confirms Mr. Siamusantu, who said the country at first fortified sugar with vitamin A, but found that sugar "was not commonly consumed and we realized it was better to go for the staple food, maize meal."

The Millers Association of Zambia, which is made up of 33 of the country's top producers of maize meal, has agreed to add vitamins and minerals to its products. The executive offi-



Checking a child's weight: Adding vitamins and other nutrients to basic foods can bolster overall health and nutritional standards.

lems," says Mr. Ward Siamusantu, who manages the country's Maize Meal Fortification Programme. "A few doses short of vitamin A or iron, and you throw away a child's ability to do their best in life. Impaired children will grow up to be impaired adults, costing Africa billions of dollars in lost productivity."

African leaders, through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), are at the forefront of continent-wide efforts to infuse micronutrients — vitamins and minerals — into maize meal, salt, flour, oil, sugar, soy and other foods. One of the goals of NEPAD, the framework guiding Africa's efforts to accelerate development, is to ensure that all citizens are healthy enough to contribute their full physical and mental potential.

Micronutrient deficiencies debilitate minds and bodies, says a report by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), *Vitamin and Mineral Deficiency*. The lack of iron alone, the report says, is so widespread in adults that it is lowering overall labour productivity, resulting in estimated losses of up to 2 per cent of GDP in the countries most affected.

cer of the association, Mr. Harrison Banda, says that at first the manufacturers worried that the additives might affect the quality of the maize meal and therefore hurt business. "We were concerned how the vitamins and minerals would affect the taste, smell and quality of our product. But we have been assured it won't be a problem."

Consumers, Mr. Banda adds, had concerns of their own. "Some people worried that this was a ploy by Western governments to experiment on them. They said, 'Why is this not given to their own people?'"

There were rumours that this would cause infertility. Through education campaigns, people now know that even in America and Europe, they eat fortified food. They know it's good for them and their children."

'A noble project'

Millers received machinery from GAIN, but need to purchase the vitamins and minerals out of pocket, raising another public concern that they would pass the costs on to consumers. But that is not the case, Mr. Banda says. "Our production costs will go up by only 3 per cent and this is a small sacrifice given what is at stake. Once our fears concerning quality were allayed, we wanted to be a part of this. We support the reasons behind this project and feel it's a noble project that should be supported by

*Fortifying
food
improves
children's
health and
their ability
to learn.*



Photo courtesy of UNICEF

the private sector." The association, he says, reaches about 60–70 per cent of the country. The remaining, more remote parts of the country are serviced by small-scale millers.

But across Africa, notes Mr. Steven Lauwerier, a UNICEF programme officer in Côte d'Ivoire, it is in remote rural areas that people are most in need of nutrient boosting. "In towns you have a direct impact, because people rely on commercial food," he points out. "But these products do not penetrate poor rural areas. There, fortification cannot be used alone. You have to complement it with more community-based nutritional programmes."

The Zambian millers' association, Mr. Banda says, is working to bring rural millers on board, if additional funding can be secured. "The vitamin doses needed per tonne of maize meal are very, very small. We cannot allow [the lack of] a few grams of vitamins to set Africa back." ■

New Partnership for Africa's Development

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was adopted as the continent's main development framework at a July 2001 summit meeting of African heads of state. According to NEPAD, attainment of Africa's long-term development goals is anchored in the determination of African peoples "to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world." It calls for a new relationship between Africa and the international community, in which the non-African partners seek to complement Africa's own efforts. The United Nations, Group of Eight industrialized nations and various donor countries have pledged to do so.

For Africa to develop, argues NEPAD, three conditions must prevail:

- peace, security, democracy and good political governance
- improved economic and corporate governance
- regional cooperation and integration.

NEPAD further identifies several priority sectors requiring special attention and action:

- physical infrastructure, especially roads, railways and power systems linking neighbouring countries
- information and communications technology
- human development, focusing on health, education and skills development
- agriculture
- promoting the diversification of production and exports.

Many of the required resources will initially need to come from outside the continent, although African governments are redoubling efforts to mobilize more domestic resources. "Africa," states NEPAD, "recognizes that it holds the key to its own development."

School feeding

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This provides market incentives to farmers to grow more. They also save money as they do not have to travel far to markets. Previously, Ms. Duffy says, food was bought from outside because local farmers were often not able to grow enough high-quality crops. African leaders, under the NEPAD framework, are helping farmers to get better-quality seeds and tools to meet the continent's food needs.

In addition to boosting student nutrition and providing farmers with a local market, the initiative is improving the economic welfare of local community members. Many now have jobs processing and cooking food for the students. They are hired, according to the WFP, to turn wheat into high-protein biscuits, cook meals and wash utensils. Also, students clean the food warehouse and utensils.

So far, nine countries — Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal and Zambia — are participating in the first phase of the NEPAD initiative, which is designed to provide meals to about 674,000 students. The initiative also provides technical assistance to Ghana and Uganda. A team from Nigeria's NEPAD office is

developing plans for a Home-Grown School Feeding project in that country.

In Senegal, 115,000 students in the regions of Kaolack, Fatick and Tambacounda currently receive meals. The initiative also aims to reach an additional 120,000 students in 350 schools in the southern Casamance region.

'Simple but concrete'

"Providing a meal at school is a simple but concrete way to give poor children a chance to learn and thrive," Ms. Duffy emphasizes, noting that "in Fatouma's case, teachers have noticed a dramatic improvement. She is regaining her weight and she can concentrate better during lessons. Every lunch break she eats, chatting away with her friends. She does not have to go hungry again."

The benefits are also felt by poor households that are now relieved of having to scratch for food. When Fatouma gets home, she says, she no longer presses her mother for food.

"Now that my child has a good meal every day at school," Fatouma's mother said. "I don't have to worry about leaving my work to prepare lunch and breakfast. I have more time for my own work and less worries about finding money and food for her breakfast and lunch." ■

Malawi storekeepers

from page 13

like Ms. Kapiza, add agricultural products — such as fertilizer, seeds, small tools and pesticides — to their shelves.

In 2000, Mr. Chapweteka said, the Malawian government commissioned a study into problems faced by farmers. "They found that the distance the farmers travel to buy seeds, fertilizers and other supplies is a big handicap. We started training storekeepers, giving them the means to procure products so farmers can get what they need at their doorstep and cut down on travel costs and time."

Credit guarantees, he says, are paramount to storekeepers like Ms. Kapiza who cannot get bank loans. The CNFA provides credit against which they can purchase supplies from participating companies in Malawi, such as Pana, SeedCo and Omnia Fertilizers.

"It was difficult to get a loan, as I needed collateral," recalls Ms. Kapiza. "With the credit guarantee, companies gave me goods. In 30 days, I must pay them back. I always pay on time. In the end they gave me even more than what CNFA could guarantee."

Ms. Kapiza says she serves an area of about 9,000 people. At first she sold household essentials such as bread and cooking oil. But business was slow, so she diversified. "There has been a 70 per cent increase in sales since I added seeds, pesticides and fertilizers to my store."

Prospects looking up

Things are looking up so much that she now employs four people: two cashiers and two men to guard the store. Confident and enthusiastic about her future, she is hardly recognizable as the same woman who thought her world had come to a standstill seven years ago when her husband died. Ms. Kapiza opened the store soon after to help with income to care for her 10 children. Her hope now, she says, is to open at least two more shops.

"When you are determined to do something, do it and mean it. Don't say: 'Because my husband is gone, I should give up.' This is my advice to women," she said. "CNFA gives the credit, but we provide the hard work."

The guarantee fund, Mr. Chapweteka observes, has worked well. "We have had, over the last five years, less than 5 per cent default out of 450 agro-dealers, which is insignificant. We are happy with the system. Programmes that work, like this one, need to happen on a much larger scale — pilot projects will not take us anywhere. Continent-wide action, under NEPAD, will hopefully open new opportunities and markets that motivate farmers."

Ms. Wanzala, the NEPAD fertilizer expert, concurs: "The Malawi project illustrates one of the actions NEPAD is trying to promote. A woman like Dinnah Kapiza bettering her income as one of the best agro-dealers in her area, while helping farmers get fertilizer, is an example of exactly what we are working to achieve all over Africa." ■

Conflict resources: from 'curse' to blessing

Transforming an African war risk into a peace asset

By **Ernest Harsch**

For years, Nigeria's oil-rich southern delta region has been the scene of repeated armed clashes among local residents, dissident groups and the military and police. The fighting has claimed many lives and sporadically disrupted the country's main export sector.

report, more than 1,000 kilometres away in the town of Gaoua in Burkina Faso, about 150 demonstrators armed with cutlasses, clubs and bows and arrows tried to march to a meeting of the newly elected municipal council. Police blocked the march, but a dozen protesters were able to present their grievances to the provincial

break the links between conflict and natural wealth. Whether as objects of competition or sources of military financing, notes UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, natural resources have played a "negative role" in many of Africa's bloodiest wars, from Sierra Leone and Liberia to Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

To highlight the problem, Mr. Legwaila's Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) organized a three-day experts' group meeting in Cairo, Egypt, in June 2006. The experts — who included representatives of governments, the UN and other regional and international organizations, civil society groups, academics and the private sector — recommended measures to strengthen international and national controls to prevent natural resources from financing warring factions. They also suggested steps to reduce domestic conflicts over access to natural wealth, including "responsible, just and economically productive resource management" by African governments, with "equitable distribution of wealth to all stakeholders, in particular local communities."

With such an approach, the experts argued, the exploitation of natural resources can be better directed towards improving society as a whole, by reducing competition and transforming natural wealth "from a peace liability to a peace asset."

The presence of a valuable natural resource is not, by itself, a "curse" destined to incite conflict (see box, page 19). Rather, argues University of London lecturer Abiodun Alao, the central issue is how such resources are used and the money they generate is distributed. "The future of the continent," he wrote in a background paper for the Cairo meeting, "depends largely on how well it manages these resources. Taking a broad look at natural resources and conflict in Africa, it seems obvious that at the centre of most of the problem is governance."



Guard at an illegal diamond mine in Angola during the country's civil war. How can such resources be turned towards peace and development?

The unrest has been stoked by popular frustrations over poverty, pollution and heavy-handed security tactics. The area's "vast oil wealth has barely touched people's lives," noted the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in a July 2006 report on human development in the Niger Delta.

Many local residents believe that the government, military and foreign oil companies are not doing nearly enough to correct this situation. "People know that they will not be allowed to enjoy the benefits of our oil unless they fight," one rebel leader in Warri told an investigator for the International Crisis Group, a non-governmental research and advocacy organization based in Brussels.

The same month the UNDP released its

high commissioner. They demanded that the authorities send police to halt illegal gold mining on a hill considered sacred by the local Lobi community.

Meanwhile, in the northern part of neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire, a rebel faction controls a large open-pit diamond mine in the town of Seguela. It is one of several producing diamonds — estimated to be worth more than \$20 mn — that have been smuggled into Mali and Ghana to help fund arms purchases, in violation of UN sanctions.

Breaking the links

As part of their broader efforts to secure peace and development on the continent, Africans and their international partners are focusing increasingly on ways to

Cleansing 'blood diamonds'

There is perhaps no better-known symbol of the link between African resources and conflict than diamonds, evocatively called "blood diamonds." Because they are small, diamonds can be easily transported and smuggled. The high price they fetch on world markets can buy many arms, pay fighters or otherwise sustain military activities.

In Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war, the fiercest fighting was over control of that country's diamond fields. Diamonds smuggled from Sierra Leone also helped finance one side in the war in neighbouring Liberia, as did illegal exploitation of Liberian timber and iron ore. In Angola's war, each side had a ready source of revenue — the government controlled offshore oil fields, while the rebel UNITA movement sustained itself for years through illegal diamond mining.

Thanks to campaigns by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and wide media coverage of the phenomenon, the Kimberley Process was launched in 2000. It is a UN-backed scheme to stop the illegal trading of diamonds and other gems from conflict zones, with scores of diamond-producing and -trading countries now belonging to the initiative. Under the arrangement, all diamond shipments from participating countries must be accompanied by a certificate of authenticity specifying their origin. Experts at the main diamond exchanges in Belgium and elsewhere conduct scientific tests of the diamonds' composition to try to verify where they came from. Participating countries pledge to punish violators.

In some countries, the Kimberley Process has had an impact. In Sierra Leone, only a mere \$1.2 mn in diamonds was legally exported in 1999, but by 2005 the figure had risen to \$140 mn, as the certification scheme encouraged more miners to sell their diamonds to authorized dealers. But the process has major shortcomings. Experts estimate that between \$30 mn and \$160 mn worth of diamonds are still smug-

gled out of Sierra Leone annually.

The illegal export of diamonds from northern Côte d'Ivoire is another indication of the limitations. Unless such problems are resolved, warns Global Witness, an advocacy NGO, the Kimberley Process risks becoming "little more than a paper-pushing exercise." Partly in reaction to the

other participants in OSAA's Cairo meeting, SaferAfrica recommended strengthening the ability of governments, NGOs, civil society groups and others to more effectively monitor compliance with the certification scheme and urged governments to penalize and punish violators.

Transparency and ethics

Besides strengthening Kimberley, the OSAA experts' group proposed that similar schemes be extended beyond diamonds to cover other valuable natural resources. That is beginning to happen, in part thanks to NGO advocacy.

Since 2002, a broad coalition of 300 civil society groups and NGOs has been waging a campaign called Publish What You Pay (PWYP), designed to pressure multinational oil companies to operate more transparently by publicly revealing the details of their oil contracts in Africa and elsewhere. The aim is to make it harder for company or government officials to engage in corrupt acts, a problem that often contributes to domestic political tensions over how oil revenues are allocated.

The NGO Global Witness has specifically highlighted the case of Angola, where some government officials, according to estimates by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), siphoned off \$4 bn in oil revenues into private offshore accounts between 1998 and 2002. Since then, the government has requested technical assistance from the World Bank to help it improve transparency in its oil sector.

Not all countries that have formally joined the initiative have actually followed up with practical steps "to prove that they are managing their oil revenues transparently," notes Mr. Christian Mounzé, of the coalition's chapter in the Congo Republic. Besides pressing for full disclosure, he also urges his own government and other African oil producers to establish special oil revenue accounts designed to benefit "future generations," as Norway has done. Mr. Mounzé and other PWYP campaign-



A 13-year-old boy carries a sack of earth and rock at a diamond mine in Mbuji-Mayi, the Congolese "diamond capital."

situation in Côte d'Ivoire, a 15 November plenary meeting of the participants in the Kimberley Process agreed to closely monitor all diamond exports from West Africa, with technical information on geological origins required in each shipment out of the region.

One inherent weakness in the Kimberley Process, argues SaferAfrica, a South African NGO, is that it is voluntary, depending on the willing cooperation of governments, companies and diamond dealers. Not all are so willing. Along with

ers have suffered legal harassment as a result of their activities.

In 2003, the UK government launched the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which seeks to improve management of revenues from oil, gas and mining. Primarily, it encourages multinational corporations to be more transparent and accountable in their mining operations. More than 20 countries — 14 of them in Africa — have formally joined the initiative. However, notes Prof. Alao, its success depends “on the willingness of multinational corporations and even incumbents in power to open all the relevant files to public scrutiny.”

Some major companies have pledged to be more open in their dealings, but many remain reluctant, citing competitive pressures, the need for business secrecy and governments’ desire for confidentiality. Moreover, the Cairo experts’ group noted, some mining companies, especially in the extractive industries, show little regard for the social and environmental risks of their operations. The experts urged corporations to implement ethical codes of conduct and the governments of the companies’ home countries to hold them accountable for their practices abroad. African governments were asked to require the companies to develop sustainable development plans to safeguard the environment, provide benefits to local communities and contribute to national development priorities.

State capacities

Even where African governments are willing to better supervise and regulate their countries’ natural wealth, they often are unable to do so very effectively. Especially in countries that are involved in conflict or struggling to recover from war, notes Prof. Alao, there is “a genuine lack of institutional capacity to effectively monitor the vast swaths of territories where natural resources are deposited.” Some resource-rich areas may be near poorly controlled borders, such as the diamond mines in Sierra Leone and Liberia and the mining regions in the eastern DRC. Others are in difficult terrain, as in Nigeria’s swampy Niger Delta.

Moreover, many central governments are unable to fully control the behaviour

of their own officials and employees. With large sums of money involved, armed factions and smugglers can often pay off ministers, licensing authorities, customs officers and border guards. During Sierra Leone’s civil war, rebels were frequently able to trade diamonds for weapons from the very government commanders and soldiers who were supposed to be fighting them.

Even in countries at peace, mining, timbering and other extractive activities are difficult to regulate. According to a

2004 study by a research group on African mining at the University of Quebec in Montreal, Canada, the economic austerity policies recommended by the IMF and World Bank in the 1980s and 1990s weakened overall state capacities in many African countries. Although some of those policies have since been modified with the aim of rebuilding state institutions, recent reforms in Africa’s mining and investment codes have conceded so many incentives to mining companies that national governments have little regulatory control and their

‘Stop blowing the gifts of nature’

When the Cold War ended, there was some initial optimism that armed conflicts in Africa would decline with the absence of the old ideological divides between East and West. While some conflicts did gradually wind down, new ones also erupted, often insurgencies or civil wars among contending political forces within the same country. As a result, not only political analysts but also economic researchers began to look at non-ideological factors, such as ethnic and economic competition.

Some of these researchers, including a team led by Mr. Paul Collier at the World Bank, detected a strong correlation between the outbreak of armed conflict and a country’s dependence on one or two readily exploitable natural resources, such as diamonds, gold or oil. The presence of profitable resources was also seen as a factor in the spread of high-level corruption, a further source of conflict and public resentment.

From this research emerged two broad concepts that were taken up by both policymakers and the media: that the very presence of valuable natural resources often serves as a “curse” that generates conflict, and that insurgent forces frequently are motivated less by genuine grievances than by “greed” for money from the control of natural wealth.

Both explanations have been criticized as simplistic. According to Prof. Wayne Nafziger of Kansas State University in the US, natural resources, by themselves, are not a curse. “Of course,” he adds, “there’s bad stewardship of resources.”

Mr. Rory O’Ferrall, director of external affairs for the De Beers diamond mining group, agrees. At a panel discussion on natural resources in African least developed countries organized by the Office of the Special Adviser for Africa (OSAA) in September, he emphasized that possessing diamonds or other minerals is not a curse. “It all depends on what you do with them.” He cited as an example Botswana, a major African diamond producer, which is a “shining example” of good governance and judicious use of diamond revenues. “Let’s stop blowing the gifts of nature and focus on what we’re doing with them.”

Under-Secretary-General Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, who heads OSAA and is himself from Botswana, made a similar point, adding that “the curse is the people who abuse” natural resources.

Participants in OSAA’s June 2006 experts’ group meeting in Cairo also considered the “greed versus grievance” view of conflict as a distortion. They argued that it tends to over-emphasize the influence of natural resources on the behaviour of rebel groups and draws insufficient attention to how poor government management of resources can contribute to conflict and human rights abuses.

Rebels in Sierra Leone and Liberia were widely believed at the time to have been primarily motivated by “greed.” But later investigations by several researchers, including Mr. Paul Richards of Wageningen University in the Netherlands, found that while rebel commanders did benefit from access to diamonds, timber and other natural resources, most young people who joined the rebel ranks were not driven by a desire for the spoils of war. Instead, they sought to oppose abuses by government authorities and traditional chiefs or rebelled in the hopes of altering rural tenure systems that denied them access to land. In both countries, as in Côte d’Ivoire and elsewhere, wrote Mr. Richards in a recent essay, “reform of rural rights seems as urgent an issue as tracking the gun-runners or diamond- and timber-smugglers.”



Photo: / Sven Tjebk

UN peacekeepers patrol against diamond and gold smugglers on Lake Kivu, in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

treasuries and economies derive few benefits. These reforms, noted the researchers, have "tended to favour a weakening of the state's fiscal basis, its capacity to monitor and enforce, and, consequently, decreased legitimacy and state sovereignty."

In light of the widespread weaknesses in national institutions, the Cairo experts' group recommended that the UN, donor agencies and other international institutions provide more aid to African countries to strengthen capacities for natural-resources management. This aid could include training for customs officials and auditors, the establishment of new systems for monitoring extractive industries and support for measures to better combat government corruption and corporate fraud.

In Liberia, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has provided technical and financial assistance to help the country develop a forestry policy. During the civil war, indiscriminate logging and illegal smuggling of forest products were used to help fund the conflict, leading the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on Liberian timber exports. A prominent Dutch timber merchant is currently on trial in the Netherlands on charges of buying timber from former President Charles Taylor in exchange for shiploads of arms and ammunition.

"The new forestry policy," says Mr. Adrian Whiteman, an FAO forestry officer who worked on the project, "aims to maximize the benefits from the forestry sector

to the Liberian people and put an end to the use of forest resources to fund conflict. The Liberian Forestry Development Authority is now in a position to regain authority and control over the forest resources."

Who decides?

Building effective institutions can often take a long time, however. In some countries, donor agencies have been tempted to step in directly to try to quickly overcome problems of corruption and poor administration.

One such initiative involved the construction of the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline to transport oil from remote fields in southern Chad to a port on Cameroon's coast. The two governments and the World Bank signed a complex arrangement in which the Bank offered to help fund the pipeline if Chad agreed to allocate the bulk of its oil revenue to specific poverty alleviation and development programmes, through accounts managed by a consortium comprised of government, World Bank and civil society representatives. The scheme was aimed at avoiding a situation in which sudden oil wealth could encourage vast corruption, while the 60 per cent of Chadians who live in poverty see few benefits.

After completion of the pipeline, three major oil companies began producing oil from Chadian wells in 2003. In 2006, the government is expected to earn \$200 mn in oil taxes and royalties — more than its entire annual fiscal revenue from all other sources. But the arrangement with the

World Bank started to come apart in late 2005 when the government announced its intention to increase the share of oil revenues going directly into the budget, and to use part of it to build up its military to confront domestic rebels and attacks from Sudanese militias across the border in Darfur.

Another donor-initiated scheme was set up in Liberia in 2005. Called the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP), it was designed to tackle corruption, fraud and other poor practices under the transitional government set

up at the end of the civil war. Under it, external financial managers were brought in to control the customs office, ministry of lands and mining and numerous state enterprises.

Opinion in Liberia is divided. Some have criticized GEMAP as a violation of Liberian sovereignty. Others see it as necessary to help control widespread graft. The new elected government of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, which took office in January 2006, views GEMAP as a useful short-term effort, but emphasizes the need to develop domestic accountability to make external initiatives unnecessary.

The experts' group meeting convened by OSAA looked at both the Chad pipeline and Liberian initiatives. It proposed that the African Union (AU) strengthen efforts to achieve better national management of natural resources, in part by incorporating specific standards into the African Peer Review Mechanism, through which African countries assess each others' governance practices. The meeting also urged donors to "respect and support the AU-led process, rather than attempt to impose governance-related conditions for development assistance or supporting externally driven parallel initiatives."

Notes Mr. John Ohiorhenuan, UNDP's deputy assistant administrator, even if initiatives such as GEMAP may be necessary because the "plundering has gotten out of hand" and there are no ready alternatives, policymakers should be aware

of the danger that such ventures may be a "double-edged sword" that can undermine state sovereignty and foster long-term dependency.

Sharing the wealth

Even if governments are able to manage their natural resources more transparently and effectively, that will have only a limited impact if the benefits are not also shared more widely within African societies. Paradoxically, many areas that have plentiful oil, diamonds or other minerals are also extremely impoverished, from the Niger Delta to Kono, the heart of Sierra Leone's diamond fields.

Mbuji-Mayi in central DRC is sometimes called the "diamond capital of the world." But the city itself is little more than a slum. Its province, Kasai Oriental, has high rates of illiteracy and infant mortality, it lacks electricity and 60 per cent of its children under five suffer malnutrition. Meanwhile, a few Congolese and foreign diamond merchants display unimaginable wealth. Such inequities contribute greatly to social and political tensions across Africa, and make it easier for armed groups to mobilize local supporters.

To counter poverty and inequality, the Cairo experts' group strongly urged African governments and mining and oil companies to ensure that a greater share of natural-resource wealth is used for social services and development programmes nationally, as well as to directly benefit local communities.

In a few cases, the concept of revenue sharing has featured prominently in peace agreements. As part of an accord that ended a long civil war in southern Sudan in 2003, the central government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army worked out a detailed arrangement in which the two sides would share revenues from oil.

In Nigeria, all 36 states received roughly equal allocations of national oil revenues until 2000, when the share for the oil-producing Niger Delta states was increased to 13 per cent in an effort to allay local grievances. But most of the money went to elites in the cities and some was lost through corruption, so that few poor residents noticed any real improvement. As a result, demands have escalated. The

governments of the oil-producing states are now asking that the share be increased to 20–25 per cent, while a government committee proposed in March 2006 that it be raised to 18 per cent.

In an effort to generate some goodwill, foreign oil companies active in the Niger Delta have also directly financed a range of local development projects, from funding health clinics and schools to building public infrastructure and hiring some local workers for their operations. While some communities have benefited, others complain that they are still excluded.

'Before they blow up'

In 2005, two NGOs (Global Witness and Partnership Africa Canada) joined with two diamond companies (De Beers and the Rapaport Group) to launch the Diamond Development Initiative (DDI). Its aim is to promote better conditions for Africa's approximately 1 million small-scale artisanal diamond miners, many of whom now earn as little as \$1 a day despite their hard and dangerous work.

DDI cites examples from various African countries where programmes are already under way to benefit artisanal miners. In Sierra Leone, the government has established a special tax to boost investments in diamond-producing communities. In the DRC, a public office was established in 2003 to help that country's hundreds of thousands of artisanal miners better organize themselves, improve safety, acquire new tools and strengthen their power to bargain with diamond merchants. It also allocates 20 per cent of its tax and licence revenues to local community development projects.

Several companies active in Angola's diamond regions have built schools, rehabilitated health clinics and hospitals, installed hydroelectric power plants and sanitation systems and launched agricultural projects. However, notes a DDI report on Angola, "Government investment — very low in a diamond-producing former war zone — needs to be increased. The expenditures by mining companies are little more than a drop in an ocean of need."

The International Crisis Group, in an August 2006 report on the conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta, noted that the most successful local development projects are those in which communities themselves play an active role. Pro-Natura International (Nigeria), a small NGO with both Delta

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and foreign staff, pioneered a "participatory" approach in the Akassa kingdom in the oil-producing state of Bayelsa in 1997. Under that approach, the communities identify "micro-projects" costing less than \$7,150, such as schools, health cen-

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Big leap in China-Africa ties

from page 3

nomic involvement in Africa. They have cited the limited regard for environmental and safety standards of some Chinese companies, their tendency to bring in Chinese workers rather than hire Africans and the stiff competition that African manufacturers face from large quantities of low-priced Chinese imports.

While acknowledging such drawbacks, other Africans have welcomed the opportunity to diversify the continent's external partnerships. They also appreciate the absence of explicit political or economic policy conditions on China's part, in contrast to the sometimes heavy-handed approach of certain Western powers.

During the summit, the Chinese authorities signaled their willingness to pay greater attention to countering corruption and protecting the environment in their African activities. Premier Wen Jiabao said that projects implemented by Chinese firms would be conducted in an "open, fair, just and transparent" manner. The action plan pledged Chinese assistance in building African countries' capacities to safeguard the environment and preserve biodiversity.

'Eyes wide open'

Chinese foreign investment in Africa has grown spectacularly since the early 1990s. According to a recent study by the industrialized countries' Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), flows of Chinese direct investment into Africa in 2003 reached \$107 mn, more than 100 times the annual level in 1991. Today, some 700 Chinese firms are estimated to hold a total investment stock of \$6.3 bn in Africa. The Beijing summit brought a dozen major new investment agreements totaling \$1.9 bn. They included deals to build expressways in Nigeria, a telephone network in rural Ghana and an aluminum smelter in Egypt.

"As long as China is so willing to invest in Africa, we must not miss out on

the bounty," Mr. Macharia Gaitho, managing editor of the Kenyan daily *Nation*, commented. "But we must engage with our eyes wide open."

'More balanced' trade

Trade between China and Africa is also expanding rapidly. Valued at only around \$3 bn in 1995, total trade grew to an estimated \$40 bn in 2005. Premier Wen stated during the summit that China hopes to increase that amount to \$100 bn by 2010.

So far, the nature of these flows has been quite similar to those between Africa and its traditional trading partners, noted the OECD study, *The Rise of China and India: What's in it for Africa?* For the most

part, it found, Africa exported oil and other raw materials to China, while importing Chinese manufactured goods. Inexpensive Chinese textile and clothing products have become prevalent in many African markets, seriously jeopardizing the survival of Africa's own manufacturers.

A columnist in the Nigerian *Daily Trust* newspaper, Mr. Charles Onunaiju, observed that unless steps are taken to alter this pattern of trade, "the relationship in future will come to resemble the Europe/America and Africa relations, that is, lopsided, dependent and even detrimental to Africa."

China's leaders are responding to such criticisms. The action plan calls for the growth of China-Africa trade "in a more balanced manner." The decision to more than double the number of African products allowed into China duty-free was one concrete step in that direction. Another was a Chinese pledge earlier in the year to voluntarily cap clothing exports to South Africa.

Whatever questions Africans may still have about China's economic relations with the continent, noted Mr. Legwaila, the high African turnout in Beijing "was a clear demonstration that China has succeeded in winning the confidence of its African partners."

Congolese women

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In June 2006, Action Aid and local NGOs organized a workshop for 50 military and regular police officers in Goma, to encourage them to arrest and prosecute perpetrators of rape. The initiative also trains officers to educate other military and police personnel, as well as paralegals in South Kivu who are helping women bring their cases to trial.

Action Aid hopes that such action will make combatants more aware of the legal penalties for what they do. And because rapes are typically ordered by military commanders, education could encourage ordinary soldiers and police to resist such orders, or at least to report them.

Ms. Josephine Odera, the Central Africa regional programme director of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), sees such activities as important. "The way to address this issue of impunity is to raise the visibility of the problem so that the violators are isolated and prosecution is improved."

"We want to break the silence," Ms. Odera told *Africa Renewal*. "We are encouraging opinion shapers and leaders to speak out against sexual violence and to tell people that they will be held accountable for such crimes."

Conflict resources

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ties, skills-training units and micro-credit facilities. Community members provide the necessary land, labour and materials, and the financing comes from oil companies, donor governments, foundations and the European Union. The effort has since been extended to three other kingdoms.

Along with transparency in public and corporate management of natural resources, many more such local development efforts are needed across Africa, says UNDP's Mr. Ohiorhenuan. Natural wealth need not contribute to conflict, he told *Africa Renewal*, if African countries initiate "internal dialogue" and deal with various forms of inequity and exclusion "before they blow up in our faces."

A F R I C A AGENDA

20-25 January 2007, Nairobi (Kenya) — World Social Forum. Seventh annual gathering of civil society activists and the first in Africa. Tel (254-20) 3860745/46, fax (254-20) 3872671, e-mail <info@wsf2007.org>, website <www.wsf2007.org>

22-30 January 2007, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) — AU Summit: Scientific Research and Technology for Africa's Socio-Economic Transformation. Focused on science, technology and innovation and organized with support from NEPAD. Contact Mrs. Habiba Mejri-Cheikh, tel (251-11) 551 7700 ext. 236, fax (251-11) 551 1299, e-mail <habibam@africa-union.org>, website <http://www.africa-union.org>

30-31 January 2007, Midrand (South Africa) — Clean Development Mechanism Africa 2007. Tel (27-11) 669-5000, email <info@iqpc.co.za>, website <www.iqpc.co.za/cgi-bin/templates/genevent.html?topic=479&event=11343&>

19-22 February 2007, Johannesburg (South Africa) — Enterprise Risk Management Africa 2007. Conference to teach entrepreneurs to effectively manage and reduce risks. Contact Debbie Tagg, tel (27-11) 516 4073, e-mail

<debbie.tagg@terrapinn.co.za>, website <www.terrapinn.com/2007/ermza>

6-9 March 2007, Brussels (Belgium) — World Biofuels Markets. Tel (44) 207 801 6333, fax (44) 207 900 1853, e-mail <annie.ellis@greenpowerconferences.com>, website <www.greenpowerconferences.com>

10-14 March 2007, Baltimore, Maryland (US) — Water for All Life: A Decentralized Infrastructure for a Sustainable Future. Sponsored by National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association. Tel (1-800) 966-2942, e-mail <executivedirector@nowra.org>, website <www.nowra.org>

9-11 May 2007, Maputo (Mozambique) — Information Society Technologies in Africa 2007. Second annual conference, bringing together representatives from leading commercial, government and research organizations across Africa and Europe. Tel (353) 1 817 0607, fax (353) 1 817 0606, e-mail <secretariat@IST-Africa.org>, website <www.ist-africa.org/Conference2007/default.asp>

28-30 May 2007, Nairobi (Kenya) — eLearning Africa 2007. On the theme "Building Infrastructures and Capacities to Reach Out to the Whole of Africa"; organized by International Conferences, Workshops and Exhibitions and Hoffmann & Reif Consultant. Tel (49-30) 327 6140, fax (49 30) 324 9833 e-mail <info@elearning-africa.com>, website <www.elearning-africa.com>

Brazzaville, une ville à reconstruire, ed. Robert Edmond Zivoula (Karthala, Paris, France, 2006; 352 pp; €29)

Constructing Justice and Security after War, ed. Charles T. Call (US Institute of Peace Press, Washington, DC, USA, 2006; 428 pp; pb \$24.95, hb \$50)

L'Afrique de l'Ouest, entre espace, pouvoir et société — Une géographie de l'incertitude by John O. 'gué (Karthala, Paris, France, 2006; 650 pp; €34)

Intellectuals and African Development: Pretension and Resistance in African Politics, eds. Björn Beckman and Gbemisola Remi Adeoti (Zed Books, London, UK, 2006; hb £65, pb £18.99)

Economic Integration and Development in Africa by Henry Kyambalesa and Mathurin C. Hounnikpo (Ashgate Publishing, Williston, Vermont, USA, 2006; 222 pp; hb \$99.95)

Information and Communication Technologies for Development and Poverty Reduction: the Potential of Communications by Maximo Torero and Joachim von Braun (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, USA, 2006; 392 pp; hb \$60, pb \$25.95)

Culture Postcoloniale. 1961-2006. Traces et mémoires coloniales en France, eds. Pascale Blanchard and Nicolas Bancel (Autrement, Paris, France, 2006; 288 pp; €19)

Africa's Development in the Twenty-first Century: Pertinent Socio-Economic and Development Issues, eds. Kwadwo Konadu-Agyemang and Kwamina Panford (Ashgate Publishing, Williston, Vermont, USA, 2006;

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

16-18 November 2006, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) — Fifth African Development Forum: Youth for Leadership in the 21st Century. Organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union. Contact Kwabla Boateng, tel (251) 115 44 35 71, fax (251) 115 51 22 33, e-mail <kboateng@uneca.org>, website <www.uneca.org/ADF>

29 November-1 December 2006, Washington, D.C (USA) — 2006 Africa Oil and Gas Forum. Co-sponsored by the US Department of Energy. Contact Kathleen Wells, tel (1 310) 551-1010, e-mail <kwells@africacncl.org>, website <www.africacncl.org/Events/2006_Oil_Gas_Forum.asp>

14-15 December 2006, Nairobi (Kenya) — 2nd Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region. Contact George Ola Davies, tel (254) 762 4029, cell (254) 734 75 60 66, e-mail <George.Ola-Davies@repsg.unon.org>, website <http://www.icglr.org/F_END/events.asp?evt=0>

17-19 December 2006, Algiers (Algeria) — Desertification and the International Policy Imperative. Organized by the UN University (UNU). Contact Caroline King, tel (1-905) 525-9140, ext 24517, fax (1-905) 529-4261, e-mail <conference@inweh.unu.edu>, website <www.inweh.unu.edu/inweh/drylands/IYDD.htm>

426 pp; hb \$124.95)

Beyond the Rhetoric: Essays on Africa's Development Challenges by Chinua Ake (Adonis and Abbey Publishers Ltd., London, UK, 2006; 160 pp; pb £12.99, \$19.95)

Globalization and Race: Transformations in the Cultural Production of Blackness by Kamari Maxine Clarke and Deborah A. Thomas (Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, USA, 2006; 424 pp; pb \$23.95, hb \$84.95)

High Stakes and Stakeholders: Oil, Conflict and Security in Nigeria by Kenneth Omeje (Ashgate Publishing, Williston, Vermont, USA, 2006; 218 pp; hb \$99.95)

Communicating National Integration: Empowering Development in African Countries by Osabuohien P. Amienyi (Ashgate Publishing, Williston, Vermont, USA, 2005; 248 pp; hb \$99.95)

Histoire des décolonisation au XXe siècle by Bernard Droz (Seuil, Paris, France, 2006; 404 pp; €23)

The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Criminology and Criminal Justice, ed. Mark M. Lanier (Ashgate Publishing, Williston, Vermont, USA, 2006; 378 pp; hb \$225)

Remaking Law in Africa, eds. Jude Murison, Anne Griffiths and Kenneth King (Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, UK, 2007; 256 pp; hb \$65)

Implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD): Challenges and the Path to Progress by S.K.B. Asante (Graphic Packaging Ltd, Accra, Ghana, 2006; 106 pp; \$10)

A F R I C A BOOKS

Africa and IMF Conditionality by Kwame Akonnor (Routledge, Abingdon, Oxford, UK, 2006; 163 pp; hb \$90)

L'Ethiopie contemporaine, ed. Gérard Prunier (Karthala, Paris, France, 2007; 440 pp; €32)

Beyond the "African Tragedy": Discourses on Development and the Global Economy, ed. Malinda S. Smith (Ashgate Publishing, Williston, Vermont, USA, 2006; 222 pp; hb \$99.95)

Zimbabwe at the Crossroads by Jacob Wilson Chikuhwa (Author House, Bloomington, Indiana, USA, 2006; 197 pp; pb \$9.31, hb \$14.06)

Global Justice: The Politics of War Crimes Trials by Kingsley Moghalu (Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT, USA, 2006; 240 pp; hb \$49.95, £28.99)

Poisoned Wells: The Dirty Politics of African Oil by Nicholas Shaxson (Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, UK, 2007; 272 pp; hb \$26.95)

Bridging the Digital Divide: Innovations Systems for ICT in Brazil, China, India, Thailand and Southern Africa, eds. Angathevar Baskaran and Mammo Muchie (Adonis and Abbey Publishers Ltd., London, UK, 2006; 256 pp; pb £22.50, \$35)

La guerre civile du Congo-Brazzaville 1993-2002: "Chacun aura sa part" by Patrice Yengo (Karthala, Paris, France, 2006; 448 pp; €29)

A F R I C A WATCH

SOUTH-SOUTH

Africa and South America expand relations

Africa and a dozen South American countries are set for greater cooperation following the first Africa-South America summit, held in Abuja, Nigeria, in November. More than 900 delegates, including numerous heads of state, came from 53 African countries and 12 South American nations (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Ecuador, Uruguay and Venezuela).

The representatives adopted a declaration paving the way for deeper trade and investment relations and the establishment of an Africa-South America Bank to fund regional infrastructure projects. The two regions also agreed to adopt common negotiating positions and coordinate strategies at the World Trade Organization.

Under the summit's Abuja Resolution, the two regions will set up a Forum of Cooperation to meet once every two years to discuss bilateral relations. Already, Venezuela has nearly doubled the number of embassies in Africa over the last few years and is now represented in 47 countries, while trade between Brazil and the continent has grown from \$5 bn in 2002 to \$15 bn in 2006. The two regions will hold their second summit in Caracas, Venezuela, in 2009.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Water insecurity threatens farmers

Climate change threatens to intensify water insecurity on an unparalleled scale, with parts of sub-Saharan Africa facing potential crop losses of up to 25 per cent by 2050 due to climate-induced weather patterns, warns the latest *Human Development Report*. The report, released by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in November, finds that even with an agreement to reduce carbon emissions through international cooperation, dangerous cli-

mate change is now almost inevitable. The most severe consequences will be experienced by countries and people who bear little responsibility for the problem, it notes. Agriculture will be hit the hardest. Because of changing rainfall patterns, malnutrition could increase by 15-26 per cent by 2050.

Already, lack of water is ravaging many parts of Africa, UNDP reports. In northeast Kenya, some 3 million people risk starvation from drought, violent clashes between farmers and pastoralists are increasingly common and the country's gross domestic product fell 16 per cent between 1998 and 2000 due to drought.

Calling for immediate action, the report's lead author, Mr. Kevin Watkins, argues that the world does not lack "the financial resources, the technology or the ingenuity to consign the water and sanitation crisis to its proper place in history books. This crisis is the product of policies and priorities that can be changed, and of a complacency that can be overcome."

TRADE

African producers get US boost

In December, the US Congress approved a trade package under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) which may help avert the loss of thousands of jobs on the continent. AGOA, first passed in 2000, provides duty-free access to the US mar-

ket for many African products. Supplementing and extending those provisions, the House of Representatives passed the AGOA Investment Incentive Act 2006 to help producers in sub-Saharan Africa better withstand heightened competitive pressures from China following the end of quotas on textile and clothing trade in 2004 (see *Africa Renewal*, April 2006).

The new measure includes the extension, until 2012, of the "third-country fabric provision," which was previously set to expire in 2007. That extension allows African clothing manufacturers to use raw materials from countries other than their own and still benefit from preferential access into the US. Kenya's representative in the US, Ambassador Peter Ogego, says this may save thousands of jobs in his country alone. Kenya created 30,000 textile jobs since AGOA was enacted, and would have lost its US preferences had the provision not been extended, since it does not produce its own fabric. The extension "will give us enough time as a country to develop our cotton sector," said Mr. Ogego.

The US is currently reforming its trade preference system for sub-Saharan Africa. Following the adoption of AGOA, clothing and textile imports from Africa into the US grew significantly, but dropped 30 per cent after quotas for the textile trade were lifted by international agreement at the end of 2004.

APPOINTMENTS



UN/Eskender Debebe

Dr. Margaret Chan of Hong Kong has been appointed director-general of the World Health Organization by the agency's 193-nation governing body, the World Health Assembly. Prior to her new appointment, Dr. Chan was WHO's assistant director-general for communicable diseases and the director-general's representative for pandemic influenza. She also served as director of health in Hong Kong, where she led the territory's response to H5N1 avian influenza and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Her term of office runs until June 2012. She becomes the first person from

China to lead a UN agency.

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in November elected Mr. Hamadoun Touré, a citizen of Mali, as its secretary-general. Mr. Touré, who was formerly the director of ITU's Telecommunications Development Bureau, will serve in the position for four years. He has more than 20 years of experience in telecommunications, including in management positions in large companies such as INTELSAT and ICO Global Communications. Mr. Touré began his career in 1979 in Mali's Office of Posts and Telecommunications.



ITU/J.M. Ferra